

Fall 2016

# Two Short Plays: The Coffee Bar and The Walls

School of Theatre and Dance  
*Illinois State University*

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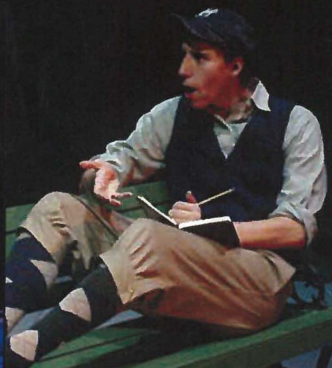
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# *Theatre and Dance*

2016-2017



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# SCHOOL OF THEATRE AND DANCE

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**Westhoff Theatre - Illinois State University**  
**The School of Theatre and Dance and The Crossroads Project presents:**

***The Coffee Bar***

**By 'Ali Salim**

**Translated by Lena Jayyusi and Thomas G. Ezzy**

**Set in Cairo, Egypt - 1960's**

**Directed by Janet Wilson**

## **Cast**

**Author..... Daija Nealy**

**Producer..... Gina Cleveland**

**Coffee Bar Attendant..... Simran Sachdev**

***Scenic Design***  
**Samantha Gribben\***

***Lighting Designer***  
**James Morrison\***

***Costume Designer***  
**Savannah Wetzel**

***Props Master***  
**Daniel Esquivel**

***Sound Designer***  
**Paige Spizzo**

***Asst. Director***  
**Kristin Schoenback\***

***Dramaturg***  
**Anthony Harden**

***Cultural Consultant***  
**Noha Shawki**

***Fight Choreographer***  
**John Tovar\***

***Stage Manager***  
**Emily Quick**

## ***The Walls***

**By Griselda Gambaro**

**Translated by Marguerite Feitlowitz**

**Set in Buenos Aires, Argentina - Sometime in the Past**

**Directed by Bruce Burningham**

## **Cast**

**Young Man..... Daniel Esquivel**

**Functionary..... Daniel Balsamo**

**Usher..... Ryan Groves**

***Scenic Design***  
**Samantha Gribben\***

***Lighting Designer***  
**James Morrison\***

***Costume Designer***  
**Meghan Graves**

***Props Master***  
**Daniel Esquivel**

***Sound Designer***  
**Ethan Hollinger\***

***Asst. Director***  
**Enrico Spada\***

***Dramaturg***  
**Daniel Esquivel**

***Stage Manager***  
**Leah Brown**

***Asst. Stage Manager***  
**Stevie Tupper**

## **SPECIAL THANKS:**

**Gary Alcorn, Connie DeVeer, Forget Me Not Flowers, Connor Herbeck, Emily Kinasz, Chelsie Kolarik, Alessia Leoni, Shawn Malott, Kee-Yoon Nahm, Braden Poapst, Erin Ponnou-Delaffon, Michelle Woody**

**\*Denotes Master of Fine Arts candidate**

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## DIRECTORS' NOTES:

*The Coffee Bar* and *The Walls* examine the eerily similar power dynamics between characters who are playing their prescribed roles within “the system.” We have paired these two plays together because of the structural and thematic similarities between them and we invite you to watch this production with an eye to the many parallels. We also encourage you to reflect upon the burning questions posited by both of these plays at this particular moment in time.

1960’s Cairo, Egypt, is the setting for *The Coffee Bar*. At this time Cairo was a cosmopolitan city that was experiencing a cultural renaissance. It is also fascinating to note that a number of women were pioneers in the arts. Their contributions were made possible by two factors: World War I and the feminist movement. However, during this same time period, as dramaturg Anthony Harden’s research unearthed, President Nasser exerted great control, not only on politics and industry, but over the entertainment industry as well. He wanted to promote his nationalist agenda through the arts. *The Coffee Bar* is an absurdist play that responds to this period of strict media censorship, telephone taps, and political enemies detained in concentration camps. Although the play responds to this particular moment in Egypt’s history, its critique and questions may be just as relevant to us today. The questions that have resonated for the director throughout the process of working on this script are: Who is “the Man” who created the contract that is controlling our lives? And what can we do about changing it?

Griselda Gambaro’s *The Walls* represents a rich fusion of the two most prominent aesthetic and intellectual currents of twentieth-century Latin American theater: existentialism/absurdism and political/social criticism. As an existentialist play, *The Walls* is related not just to works like Eugene Ionesco’s *The Chairs* and Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*, but also to distinctly Latin American plays like Jorge Díaz’s *The Toothbrush* and José de Jesús Martínez’s *Final Judgement*. But where the European Theatre of the Absurd originates in an attempt to explore *meaning* (or, more precisely, the *lack of meaning*) within the context of the horrors and aftermath of World War II, the Latin American Absurd emerges within a context best summed up by Mexican President Porfirio Díaz, who in the early twentieth century lamented that Mexico found itself “tan lejos de Dios y tan cerca de Estados Unidos” (“so far from God and so close to the United States”), and Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío, who once said of the United States, “Cuando ellos se estremecen hay un hondo temblor que pasa por las vértebras enormes de los Andes” (“When they shudder, a profound tremor passes through the enormous vertebrae of the Andes”). In this regard, even an existentialist play like *The Walls* is always already political. Thus, as a work of social criticism, Gambaro’s play is also one of a long line of literary and artistic works that shine a bright light on the brutality of dictatorship. And while *The Walls* was written in 1963 and had its premiere in Buenos Aires in 1966, well before the Argentine “Dirty War” of 1974-1983, it is hard not to experience Gambaro’s play today as a prescient commentary on the fate of the “desaparecidos” who were kidnapped, tortured, and made to disappear into the black hole of the Argentine dictatorship during those very dark years.

# SCHOOL OF THEATRE AND DANCE

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## *The Coffee Bar and The Walls Production Staff*

Technical Director .....	Dave George
Master Carpenter .....	Max Marciniak
Master Electrician .....	Erica Maholmes
Asst. Lighting Designer and Master Electrician/Light Board Operator .....	Halley Paluch
Asst. Prop Masters .....	Nick Chamernik, Adam Peak
Scenic Artist .....	Samantha Gribben*
Wardrobe Supervisor .....	Dillon Knapp
Run Crew .....	Rachel Hall, Kiara Irizarry, Maggie Joyce, Anders Titus, Masen Virginia, Abigail Winter
Light Crew .....	Parker Carbine, Taylor Eaves, Alex Kulak, Makenna Lockhart, Owen Mcgee, Everson Pierce, Tahalia Rusley
Paint Crew .....	Madeline Cleveland, Dylan DeWitt, Muhammad Javed, Alyssa Middleton, Stephanie Naumowicz
Wardrobe Crew .....	Madison Gillis, Melissa Goerke, Robert Hunter-Bry, Katie Kurz, Megan Rechtien, Caitlin Wolfe

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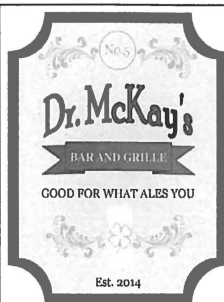
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